

Subject

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Meaning & purpose

A subject is a term, keyword, classification code or phrase representing the primary topic or topics covered by a registry object. This information answers the questions: What subject terms describe the topic of this object? What is it about?

Subjects support searching and discovery in Research Data Australia.

Use Subject to associate activities with the field of activity, collections with the subject matter of items in the collection, and parties with a field of activity or occupation. Services can be assigned subjects and may also be associated with a topic through the collections which they support.

Subject attributes

Subject Type

Subject Type records the name of an authoritative list or controlled vocabulary from which a subject term or phrase is taken or that governs its form.

A Subject Type is optional. If used, preferably specify a type using the Subject Type vocabulary below. Values for Subject Type may also be taken from the [Library of Congress Source Codes for Subjects](#) list.

[ANZSRC codes](#) are the preferred vocabulary for describing research domain entities and activities in the RDA Registry. The RDA Registry accepts values from both the 2020 release of ANZSRC and the superceded 2008 release.

Type	Explanation
anzsrc-for	Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification: Field of Research codes
anzsrc-toa	Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification: Type of Activity
anzsrc-seo	Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification: Socio-economic Objective codes
apt	Australian Pictorial Thesaurus (not currently maintained)
gcmd	Global Change Master Directory Keywords . Commonly used in the earth sciences.
iso639	International Standard for language codes
lcsch	Library of Congress Subject Headings
pont	Powerhouse Museum Object Name Thesaurus
scot	Schools Online Thesaurus
psychit	Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms
local	A local subject keyword: may be controlled or uncontrolled

If you would like a new Subject Type to be included in the vocabulary, please send a request to services@ardc.edu.au.

Term Identifier attribute

Many subject terms come from controlled vocabularies or classification schemes which can be represented by unique codes or persistent URIs, which resolve to further explanation about the term or are "linked data" URIs; the TermIdentifier attribute allows these codes and URIs to be included. Research Data Australia is not currently using term identifiers, but they will be integral to future integration with the [Research Vocabularies Australia](#) controlled vocabulary service and Research Data Australia. Contributors are encouraged to provide term identifiers in anticipation of these developments.

Language attribute

The language in which the subject metadata is recorded may be included in the Lang attribute, but is not displayed or searchable in Research Data Australia. The RDA Registry accepts [language codes](#) consistent with [IETF's BCP \(Best Current Practice\) 47: Tags for Identifying Languages](#) (incorporating RFC 5646). Language codes may be selected from:

- [IANA Language subtag registry](#) (an [IANA Language subtag lookup tool](#) is available also)

Use in Research Data Australia

- All Subject values are displayed and searchable and add to the findability of information in Research Data Australia.
- Subject Types are displayed to provide the source authority for Subject values.

- The following Subject Types when used, are available for filtering search results: anzsrc-for (all searches); and anzsrc-seo, gcmd, lcsh (Library of Congress Subject Headings), apt (Australian Pictorial Thesaurus), pmont (Powerhouse Museum Object Name Thesaurus), psychit (Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms) (advanced search only)
- The corresponding labels for the ANZSRC codes entered in Subject are displayed in Research Data Australia, e.g. anzsrc-for code '040310' displays as 'Sedimentology' in Research Data Australia. (Exception: The 2020 release of ANZSRC is being implemented in stages in Research Data Australia, and as such, codes introduced or updated with the 2020 release may not currently display with the correct label).
- @termIdentifier does not currently display; this may change with future enhancements to Research Data Australia.

Best practice

- Include at least one ANZSRC code in every RIF-CS record contributed to Research Data Australia (2-digit, 4-digit, or 6-digit codes can be used). FOR codes are preferred (the relevant code for a given research project is usually included in grant documents and is likely to be known to researchers).
 - Record Subject Type, e.g. "anzsrc-for".
 - Only include the code, not the label in RIF-CS records; labels are automatically displayed in Research Data Australia.
- The ANZSRC codes should be supplemented with other subject terms or keywords needed to describe the intellectual content of an activity, collection, or service. Use of other discipline-specific controlled vocabularies will improve discovery (search for suitable vocabularies in [Research Vocabularies Australia](#))
 - Record the [type of controlled vocabulary](#) from which the discipline-specific keyword or term was sourced.
- Local values or keywords that are not part of controlled vocabularies may also assist discovery and therefore can be used.
- Include Term Identifiers if they are available.

Best practice for parties as subjects

- Include a party as a subject where the party is the subject or topic of the collection, for example a collection of an individual's research papers and memorabilia, or a collection of documents and photographs relating to a company.
- This is described by including the party in the Subject element for that collection, rather than by creating a Party record for the person or group.
- Use the collection's Subject element to describe parties as subjects by including their name term and referencing the relevant name authority as the Type.
- Include a global identifier such as ORCID, or an NLA Party Identifier in @termIdentifier.
- Do not link a collection to an existing party record and create ad hoc Relation Types such as 'isSubjectOf'.

XML encoding examples

ANZSRC (2020)

```
<subject type="anzsrc-for" termIdentifier="https://linked.data.gov.au/def/anzsrc-for/2020/370509" xml:lang="en">370509</subject>
<subject type="anzsrc-seo" termIdentifier="https://linked.data.gov.au/def/anzsrc-seo/2020/170601" xml:lang="en">170601</subject>
<subject type="anzsrc-toa" xml:lang="en">Applied research</subject>
```

ANZSRC (2008)

```
<subject type="anzsrc-for" termIdentifier="http://purl.org/au-research/vocabulary/anzsrc-for/2008/040310" xml:lang="en">040310</subject>
<subject type="anzsrc-seo" termIdentifier="http://purl.org/au-research/vocabulary/anzsrc-seo/2008/850201" xml:lang="en">850201</subject>
<subject type="anzsrc-toa" xml:lang="en">Applied research</subject>
```

Local

```
<subject type="local" xml:lang="en">Burma (Myanmar)</subject>
<subject type="local" xml:lang="en">Sediment Flux</subject>
<subject type="local" xml:lang="en">Coastal Sedimentation</subject>
```

Other subject vocabularies

```
Global Change Master Directory Keywords:
<subject type="gcmd" termIdentifier="510c5f78-e19e-4ce4-b59a-8937aeb84631">Ocean currents</subject>

Australian Public Affairs Information Service Thesaurus:
<subject type="apaist">Environmental impact studies</subject>
```

Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Thesaurus:
<subject type="asft">Bathymetric data</subject>

National Library of Medicine's Medical Subject Headings:
<subject type="mesh" termIdentifier="D010359">Patient readmission</subject>

Library of Congress Subject Headings:
<subject type="lcsch" termIdentifier="http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh86007058">Heterocyclic chemistry</subject>
<subject type="lcsch">Coral bleaching</subject>

CAS numbers (used to identify chemicals):
<subject type="cas" termIdentifier="9003-07-0">Polypropylene</subject>

Party as a subject

ORCID:
<subject type="orcid" termIdentifier="http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1825-5038">Douglas M. Smith</subject>

NLA Party Identifier:
<subject type="AU-ANL:PEAU" termIdentifier="http://nla.gov.au/nla.party-1463596">Thomas Mann (1856-1941)</subject>

Getty Research Institute Union List of Artists' Names (ULAN):
<subject type="ulan" termIdentifier="500275298">Alfred Alexander Whitely Hill</subject>

Change history

Date	Change history
April 2010	Consultation draft
26 Oct 2010	First web publication
21 Nov 2011	Added termIdentifier information, effective from introduction of RIF-CS v1.3.0 from 7 December 2011; how to describe parties as subjects
26 Jun 2012	Added information about use of subject types and term identifiers
20 Nov 2012	Added link to information about the prototype vocabulary service
7 May 2014	Review carried out: minor edits, corrections and ordering of information. ORCID termIdentifier examples given.
18 Nov 2014	Added information about the gcmd subject type which was added with RIF-CS v1.6.0
18 July 2017	Content reviewed and updated.
10 Dec 2018	Updating coding for LCSH example
22 Jun 2021	Updated references to ANZSRC to point to the 2020 release. Added an XML encoding example.